

Water Sense

Topic: Water

Objectives: Use your senses to characterize water

Grade Level: all

Time: 5- 10 minutes

Materials: beakers, vegetable oil, liquid soap, bottle of clean water for rinsing hands, writing pads, pens, or pencils

Location: Lake Clara Meer

Background: Many observations about water can be made with only your senses. In this activity you will use sight, smell, sound and touch to discover some of the characteristics of Lake Clara Meer.

Procedure:

1. As you walk to you study site, use your eyes, ears and noses to observe Lake Clara Meer.
2. Observe the color of the lake water.
3. Look at the surface of the water. Are there areas covered by pond scum? Do you see any patches with an oily or shiny appearance? Is there natural or man made material floating on the surface?
4. Observe the shoreline of the lake and the edges between the water and the land. What sort of plant growth do you observe? Do you see evidence of erosion at the shoreline? List any signs of human or other animal life that you observe.
5. Look into the lake. Can you see the bottom? What do you observe in the lake?
6. Sniff the air around the lake. Do you detect any odors?
7. Stand quietly near the shore of the lake and listen. List the sounds you hear.
8. Use the bucket to collect some water from the lake. Feel the water with your hands. Observe how it feels. Rinse your hands with clean water after you feel the lake water.

Vocabulary:
pond scum
erosion
stagnant
algae

Questions to think about and discuss:

1. What did you observe about the water from using your eyes? How did it look? How would you describe the color of the lake? If you were going to paint the lake, what colors would you use in your picture?
2. Did you see anything on the surface of the lake? Did you see any areas with pond scum or where the surface had a shiny appearance? Pond scum is caused by algae and often covers stagnant areas of fresh water. A shiny film on the surface may mean that oil has polluted the water. What sort of material did you see floating on the water? How do you suppose these things on the surface of the water affect the lake?
3. When you looked in the lake, did it appear clear or muddy? What did the bottom of the lake look like? Does what you observed give you information about where the lake is located and how it is used?
4. Describe the appearance of the shoreline. How do you think the shoreline might differ if this lake were located in a rural rather than an urban area?
5. How did the air around the lake smell? What might have created the smells you detected? Think about how the weather might change the smell of the air around the lake. How do you suppose these observations relate to where the lake is located and how it is used?
6. Name some of the sounds that you heard when you listened at the lakeshore. Which sounds were manmade? Which were natural? Which sounds were due to nearby plants? Which sounds did animals create? How would the sounds differ on a different day or at a different time of day? What if it were rainy or windy? How would the sounds differ at a different time of year?
7. Describe how the water felt? Did it feel hot or cold? What was its texture?